

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereafter (where underlining “_” denotes additions and strikethrough “-” denotes deletions).

Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:
a receiver for receiving a first message over a first shared-communications channel, wherein said first message comprises:
 - (i) a notification that said first shared-communications channel has been reserved, and
 - (ii) one or more values that define in time
 - (a) a first reservation offset time interval upon the conclusion of which a first signal is transmitted over a combination of the first shared-communications channel and a second shared-~~communication~~ communications channel, and during which the first and second shared-communications channels may be used; and
 - (b) a second reservation duration time interval during which a first shared-~~communication~~ communications channel and the second shared-~~communication~~ communications channel are reserved, and upon the conclusion of which the transmission of the first signal

over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel is ended, wherein said second time interval is after said first time interval.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said first message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said notification causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said second time interval.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 21 wherein said transmitter is also for transmitting, after said second time interval, a third signal over the combination of a plurality of shared-communications channels.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 3 wherein said transmitter is also for, prior to transmitting said third signal, transmitting sequentially over each of said plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving that each of the plurality of shared-communications channels ~~channel~~.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 21 wherein said transmitter is also for, prior to receiving said first message:

transmitting over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving ~~that~~ each of the plurality of shared-communications channels ~~channel~~; and
transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said receiver is also for receiving, during said first time interval, a second message over said second shared-communications channel associated with reserving said second shared-communications channel.

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 21 further comprising a processor for:

sending signals to said transmitter, receiving signals from said receiver,
and
executing a contention-based protocol prior to said transmitter transmitting said second signal over said first shared-communications channel.

8. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 21 wherein said second signal comprises a data message.

9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 21 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval; and wherein said third time interval is after said second time interval; and wherein said transmitter is also for:

transmitting, within said first time interval, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said reservation message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said reservation message causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said third time interval.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4 21 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message comprising one or more values defining a third time interval; and wherein said third time interval is after said second time interval; and wherein said transmitter is also for:

transmitting, within said second time interval and after said first signal is transmitted, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and
transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said reservation message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said reservation message causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said third time interval.

13. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
- (a) receiving a first message over a first shared-communications channel, wherein said first message comprises:
 - (i) a notification that said first shared-communications channel has been reserved,
 - (ii) a first reservation offset time interval and a second reservation duration time interval, and
 - (b) reserving ~~[[a]]~~ the first shared-communications channel and a second shared-communications channel defined in time by
 - (i) the first time interval, upon the conclusion of which a first signal is transmitted over a combination of the first shared-communications channel and ~~[[a]]~~ the second shared-communication communications channel, and during which the first and second shared-communications channels may be used; and
 - (ii) the second time interval upon the conclusion of which the transmission of the first signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel is ended, wherein said second time interval is after said first time interval.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein said first message is also received by a station that always transmits via one shared-communications channel at a time, and wherein said notification causes said station to refrain from transmitting until after said second time interval.
15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~13~~ 22 further comprising:
- (c) transmitting, after said second time interval, sequentially over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving ~~that~~ each of the plurality of shared-communications channels ~~channel~~; and
 - (d) transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.
16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~13~~ 22 further comprising:
- transmitting, prior to receiving said first message, sequentially over each of a plurality of shared-communications channels a respective message for reserving ~~that~~ each of the plurality of shared-communications channels ~~channel~~; and
- transmitting a third signal over the combination of said plurality of shared-communications channels.

17. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
- (c) receiving, during said first time interval, a second message over said second shared-communications channel associated with reserving said second shared-communications channel.
18. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
- (c) executing, after (a) and prior to (b), a contention-based protocol to gain access to said first shared-communications channel.
19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~13~~ 22 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval that is after said second time interval; said method further comprising:
- (c) transmitting, within said first time interval, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and
 - (d) transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~13~~ 22 wherein said second signal comprises a reservation message for reserving said first shared-communications channel during a third time interval that is after said second time interval; said method further comprising:

- (c) transmitting, within said second time interval and after said first signal is transmitted, a third signal over said second shared-communications channel for reserving said second shared-communications channel during said third time interval, and
- (d) transmitting, within said third time interval, a fourth signal over the combination of said first shared-communications channel and said second shared-communications channel.

21. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a transmitter for transmitting, during the first reservation offset time interval, a second signal over the first shared-communications channel only.

22. (New) The method of claim 13, further comprising transmitting, within said time interval, a second signal over said first shared-communications channel only.